



## Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).

was sent me by the Rev. Jas. Fowler from New Brunswick, and from within our own limits by Dr. Clarke from Flint, Mich. ; two widely sundered stations on our northern boundary, suggesting the possible occurrence of intermediate ones. The only additional specimens in Prof. Gray's herbarium are two ♂ fragments named by Andersson, enough to confirm the correctness of the above determination. The typical form has round, sub-cordate, very thin, reticulate veined leaves, slender petioles, small caducous stipules, foliaceous peduncles, and very long and slender pedicels. The var. *obscura* (apparently a more vigorous growth of the same plant?) would be likely to escape observation from its general resemblance to some forms of *S. cordata*.

*S. ADENOPHYLLA* Hook. This is another and most interesting addition to our willows of the Northern States. Its occurrence on sandy beaches of the Great Lakes I have already noticed in "The Lens."

*S. CUTLERI* Tuck. If Dr. Andersson's var. *Labradorica* (DC. Prodr. xvi, p. 292) is rightly associated with our White Mountain plant, then the old name of *Uva-Ursi* Pursh ought to be restored for the Labrador plant, and ours become its var. *Cutleri*.

Col. S. T. Olney observes that *S. tristis* Ait. flowers "fully a fortnight later than *S. humilis*." This is noteworthy, as *S. tristis* affects warm, sunny knolls, and would therefore be expected to flower *earlier* instead of later than its more robust congener, *S. tristis* var. *microphylla*. For all I know this variety rests upon a single gathering, distributed by Mr. Oakes many years ago ; probably a *forma monstrosa*. I had in my garden last summer precisely the same "rigid and contorted" leaves produced on *S. viminalis* by insects infesting the under surface, but have looked in vain over acres of *S. tristis* for specimens to match those of Mr. Oakes.

---

## THE ROBIN.

BY CAROLINE BOYCE.

---

THE American robin (*Turdus migratorius*) is too well known to every resident of the United States, to require any extended description, and yet, I am often surprised at the ignorance of

farmers and countrymen in general, as to his character and habits. They shoot and stone, and destroy and berate, but never praise him; still he perseveres, in the very teeth of an adverse fate, and comes regularly with the spring months, appearing sometimes, in element seasons, in eastern New York, in February, and remaining oftentimes when the fall is favorable until late in November, and instances have been known when a straggler separated from the main flock has remained, and survived the severity of a winter in latitude 42° north, in a locality where evergreens were prevalent. The robin can accommodate himself to a variety of food, and during the summer season is the farmer's best friend. He is hardy and robust and brave, one of our valuable, but most badly abused birds. His food is mainly insectivorous, from the time he comes amongst us until late in the autumn. He makes occasional visits to the cherry tree but does not depend on it for a subsistence as he is supposed to do. He pecks at the cherries because they are red, just as he would pick to pieces a red flower. The species appears fond of the color. In the fall they feed largely on wild berries, and are slaughtered by the thousands by sportsmen along the lines of the Hudson, in the cedar thickets, which they frequent, feeding on the berries, on the islands in the harbor of New York Bay, and in New Jersey. I am too much the friend of this bird to be blind to his petty faults, for petty indeed they must remain so long as his increase is kept in rigid restriction by his many enemies. The crow (*Corvus Americanus*) commits fearful and cruel depredations on the robin and his belongings. The species is a bitter foe to all smaller birds, and keeps them in severe check, but the robin suffers numerous outrages from other hands, and the elements sometimes play him a mischievous trick. Not only the crow, but the crow blackbird (*Quiscalus versicolor*) and the cuckoo (*Coccyzus Americanus*) often rob the nest after the eggs are laid, and thus all the female's labor proves in vain. The robin will steal into the nest of one of her own kind, during a temporary absence of the owner, when she had thus been robbed, and appropriate it as her own, depositing a remaining egg of her clutch, or mayhap more and, if plucky, will drive off the legal owner, and taking bold possession, bestow all her care thereon, but she never disturbs the rights of other birds. Occasionally she only drops an egg into a sister's nest when taken short, her own being destroyed,

but the act is never deliberate or voluntary, a habit that is never practised among the species except in extreme cases of necessity, for regular bird life has its laws that are observed, and crimes and persecutions are often punished. The nest, which is an extravagant, clumsy affair, extravagant as to material employed, is patted up by the feet at the fork of limbs, and is moulded in the inside by the breast, the bird turning round and round many times with the tail hugged down close on the outer rim, the female performing all the labor. The male takes no part in this structure, but is stationed near as a guard, and gives the alarm if danger portends, while the *mater en famille* is absent in quest of material. If all be quiet and serene, a snatch of song may greet the listening ear, but it is hurried, for the male is deeply interested in operations, and feels a heavy responsibility resting on his shoulders. When the female is descried with a supply in her beak, he immediately flies to meet and accompany her. The two alight near and survey the premises when, if all be right, the labor goes on vigorously. This work occupies them three or four days, sometimes a shorter period, according to the urging necessity of nature that the bird feels. The eggs are deposited daily, until the number is dropped. The robin on an average lays four eggs, but I have seen five eggs, followed by five birds in one nest, all one mother's progeny, but there are oftener three. Two appears to be the lucky number for the robin, and they usually go mated from the nest. A robin lodged her nest in a small tree near my dwelling last year in the after part of May, and reared three young. When they were able to leave the nest, another was built a little farther off in the fork of a young pear tree, not more than five feet from the ground. In this nest was brought up, right under the loaded boughs of a cherry tree, two fine birds, a male and a female, and all my sedulous watching never caught them in the guilty act of carrying cherries to the nest. The birds had become accustomed to me, and familiar, and never appeared to stand in fear of my scrutinizing presence, although they eyed my movements as closely as I viewed theirs; but I always observed a formal distance, and held in respect their individual rights: thus was I tolerated without giving disturbance. The robin rears but two broods in one season. After the first brood leaves the nest, in a day or two, they are turned over entirely to the charge of the male, who feeds, protects, and keeps

in close proximity, while the female is occupied with preparations for a second family. The second nest is not very far removed from the first, and fortunate indeed must the parents be if these two broods all grow to be adult birds. If the male gives no assistance in building the nest, yet he has his duties to perform which become him marvellously. As soon as the birds are out of the shell it is his business to clear out the nest of all offensive matter, and keep it clean of all excrement until the birds have flown, provide all the food, which is purely insectivorous, and sit upon the nest in the female's absence, which is no small ignoble office for so brave and noble a fellow as cock robin. He finds but little time now for his loud, long strains. His part of duty will not bear neglect.

The young, when left undisturbed, seldom go far away from the home nest, although when they once leave, they never enter it again. It is left in an uncleanly state, generally alive with vermin, which soon leave the young bird. The robin is remarkably clean in every habit, and takes a daily bath. I was much amused one day, the past summer, at a little incident that occurred in the front yard under the cherry tree.

A female robin was gathering materials for a second nest, picking from around the roots of rose bushes, the long dead grasses, until her beak was filled and the ends flowed out like silken hairs, when suddenly one of her own young ones, a pretty mottled little creature, alighted in front of her and, opening wide her yellow throat, begged for food. The mother thus taken without warning was confused, and administered a gentle peck on the head as a reproof, which did not have the desired effect, so she immediately plunged the whole contents of her beak down the little one's throat and flew away. The poor little thing had a long and difficult tug, in clearing its throat of the unstable commodity, but the repentant parent soon returned with wholesome food, and gave her offspring, after which the male appeared, and piloted off the offending charge to an adjoining tree. No doubt mine frau gave her liege lord a severe curtain lecture, upon the occasion. Secrets of bird-life are seldom revealed but to the understanding few. Has any one ever observed the manner in which a bird approaches its object, how cautiously, politely, quietly, it proceeds moving with one eye ever on the alert for danger, and the other solicitously bent on the particular thing of its desire? How it

advances, then recedes, then bows and courtesies with all the suavity of a Frenchman, and peers inquiringly, stooping down low, placing its nimble little body in a thousand graceful positions, as it slowly, steadily and discreetly approaches its object of concern?

If I should venture to say that not a cherry would grow, fit to be eaten, were it not for the birds, the bare idea would be hooted as preposterous, yet such nevertheless is my belief. Were it possible to remove all the birds out of the way, for one season at least, what a decided difference would our future orchards present! Where now are thrifty growths, beautiful leafage, and large crops of fair fruit, would be seen stunted, moss-grown limbs with sparse or meagre foliage, crops of dwarfed specimens, that have finished their growing, in a knotty, wormy, inferior state. The majority of all the large families of insects are bred in the earth, and go through various forms in different stages of existence and are devoured by birds of every description, chief among which stands our friend, the robin.

The robin sits eleven days. On the eleventh the young are out of the shell, and on the eighth their eyes are wide open and bodies covered with pin feathers. In eleven days more they leave the nest on an average, although when the nest be not crowded they remain two days longer. Upon close observation the plumage of the adult robin is tame, but rich and mellow, with soft colorings. The top of the head is dappled in brown and black, with delicate markings and pencillings at the throat where it meets the cinnamon breast in the male. The female is lighter in color and has no rosy tinge to the neck feathers. There is but a slight difference in the size of the male and female, but the general shape and build of the birds is marked so perceptibly that a practised eye can readily distinguish between the two. In general appearance the female is the larger bird, but the male is stronger, closer and altogether more powerful in limb. The large bright eyes in both sexes are set in a ring of white. As a songster, the robin does not rank high, yet there are some rare singers among the species. A singer has a long, slender body, a long neck, long tail, dark, rich plumage, soft like satin. He is a fine bred bird. All are not first class singers. Nature does not appear to endow all with her rare gift. Where there is one that is a singer there are scores that are only mediocre. The robin's note is peculiarly mellow and flute

like, sometimes a little irregular and extravagant, but, when followed closely, through all its various changes, vibrations and intonations, is found to possess a striking sweetness and freshness, seldom excelled and rarely equalled, if we except the beautiful strain of the hermit thrush. He gives to his lower notes a quiet dash of subdued sadness, and then immediately swells them to upward bars of wondrous perfection and beauty. He has a set of notes in an under key that are seldom heard by the unobservant ear, and if heard are attributed to another bird. He gives a clear, quick, military call and has a piercing cry of distress. The notes about the nest are all suppressed and low, but yet clear and distinct. They are uttered by the female and are the language of the mother to her offspring. She has no distinct song.

---

## RAMBLES OF A BOTANIST IN WYOMING TERRITORY.

BY REV. E. L. GREENE.

---

### NO. II.

WITH the month of July, the varied profusion of flowers begins to be greatly reduced on the high plains, whose rich spring flora was briefly sketched in the last number.

On the third of this month we stood upon the summit of a ridge commanding a view of many surrounding miles of these treeless lands. The grasses, under the constant sun and the now advancing drought, were already losing their freshness of color, and becoming cured, uncut, into hay for the antelope and the domestic herd, to feed them during the next eight months. There is yet one very showy flowering plant, which has so far resisted the drought, and is now giving to even hundreds of acres of ground the very azure of the sky above — a sea of blue. The plant is *Delphinium azureum* Michx., a perennial species of larkspur. In the month of April the root-leaves make their appearance, and as they furnish then the only sort of green herbage that has been seen for many months, herdsmen are obliged to exercise all diligence to keep cattle away from the tracts which this plant occupies. The